# JFK ASSASSINATION SYSTEM
## IDENTIFICATION FORM

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CAS 79407

SEE SANITIZED VERSION NLK-[illegible]-330 + DOWNGRADED TO SECRET

October 30, 1963

~~TOP~~ SECRET

EYES ONLY FOR AMBASSADOR LODGE

FROM McG. Bundy, White House

1. Our reading your thoughtful 2063 leads us to believe a significant difference of shading may exist on one crucial point (see next para) and on one or two lesser matters easily clarified.

2. We do not accept as a basis for U. S. policy that we have no power to delay or discourage a coup. In your paragraph 12 you say that if you were convinced that the coup was going to fail you would of course do everything you could to stop it. We believe that on this same basis you should take action to persuade coup leaders to stop or delay any operation which, in your best judgment, does not clearly give high prospect of success. We have never considered any betrayal of generals to Diem, and our 79109 explicitly rejected that course. We recognize the danger of appearing hostile to generals, but we believe that our own position should be on as firm ground as possible, hence we cannot limit ourselves to proposition implied in your message that only conviction of certain failure justifies intervention. We believe that your standard for intervention should be that stated above.

3. Therefore, if you should conclude that there is not clearly a high prospect of success, you should communicate this doubt to generals in a way calculated to persuade them to desist at least until chances are

better. In such a communication you should use the weight of U. S. best advice and explicitly reject any implication that we oppose the effort of the generals because of preference for present regime. We recognize need to bear in mind generals' interpretation of U. S. role in 1960 coup attempt, and your agent should maintain clear distinction between strong and honest advice given as a friend and any opposition to their objectives.

~~4. With respect to money for coup group you are authorized to make such clandestine disbursements as you consider secure and effective from available CAS piasters.~~

4 ~~5~~. We continue to be deeply interested in up-to-the-minute assessment of prospects and are sending this before reply to our CAS 79126. We want continuous exchange latest assessments on this topic.

5. ~~6~~ To clarify our intent, paragraph 7 of our 79109 is rescinded and we restate our desires as follows:

a. While you are in Saigon you will be chief of country team in all circumstances and our only instruction is that we are sure it will help to have Harkins fully informed at all stages and to use advice from both him and Smith in framing guidance for coup contacts and assessment. We continue to be concerned that neither Conein nor any other reporting source is getting the clarity we would like with respect to alignment of forces and level of determination among generals.

b. When you leave Saigon and before there is a coup, Truehart will be chief of the country team. Our only modification of existing procedures is that in this circumstance we wish

all instruction to Conein to be conducted in immediate consultation with Harkins and Smith so that all three know what is said to Conein. Any disagreement among the three on such instructions should be reported to Washington and held for our resolution, when time permits.

c. If you have left and a coup occurs, we believe that emergency situation requires, pending your return, that direction of country team be vested in most senior officer with experience of military decisions, and that officer in our view is Harkins. We do not repeat not intend that this switch in final responsibility should be publicized in any way, and Harkins will of course be guided in basic posture by our instructions, which follow in paragraph 7. Thus we do not believe that this switch will have the effect suggested in your paragraph 8.

6. This paragraph contains our present standing instructions for U. S. posture in the event of a coup.

a. U. S. authorities will reject appeals for direct intervention from either side, and U. S. -controlled aircraft and other resources will not be committed between the battle lines or in support of either side, without authorization from Washington.

b. In event of indecisive contest, U. S. authorities may in their discretion agree to perform any acts agreeable to both sides,

such as removal of key personalities or relay of information. In such actions, however, U. S. authorities will strenuously avoid appearance of pressure on either side. It is not in the interest of USG to be or appear to be either instrument of existing government or instrument of coup.

c. In the event of imminent or actual failure of coup, U. S. authorities may afford asylum in their discretion to those to whom there is any express or implied obligation of this sort. We believe however that in such a case it would be in our interest and probably in interest of those seeking asylum that they seek protection of other Embassies in addition to our own. This point should be made strongly if need arises.

d. But once a coup under responsible leadership has begun, and within these restrictions, it is in the interest of the U. S. Government that it should succeed.

7. We have your message about return to Washington and ~~if announcement has not already been made,~~ we suggest that ~~it~~ all public comment be kept as low-key and quiet as possible, and we also urge that if possible you keep open the exact time of your departure. We are strongly sensitive to great disadvantage of having you out of Saigon if this should turn out to be a week of decision, and if it can be avoided we would prefer not to see you pinned to a fixed hour of departure now.

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